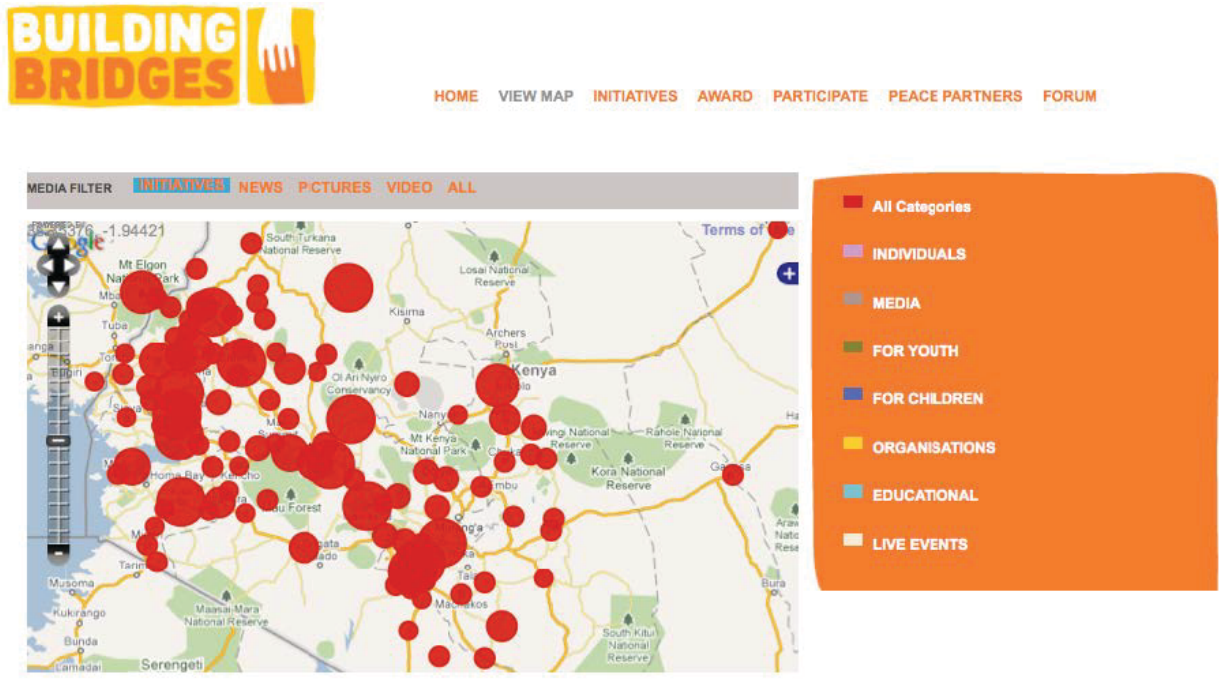
Ushahidi

Case Study: Unsung Peace Heroes / Building Bridges



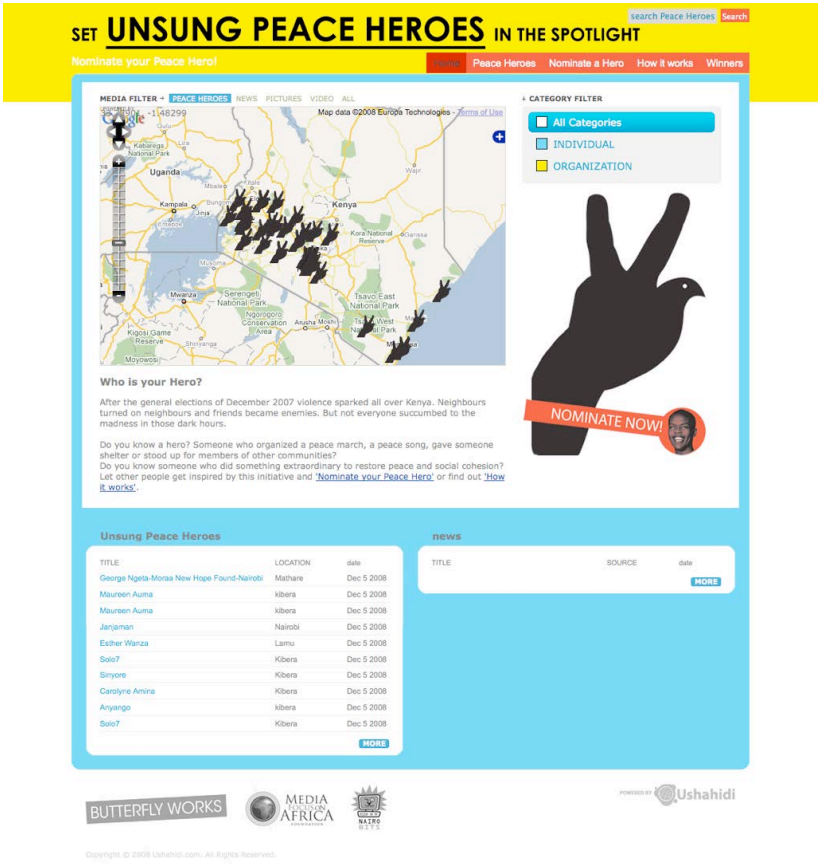
Harvard Humanitarian Initiative

Knight Foundation

Case Study: Unsung Peace Heroes and Building Bridges

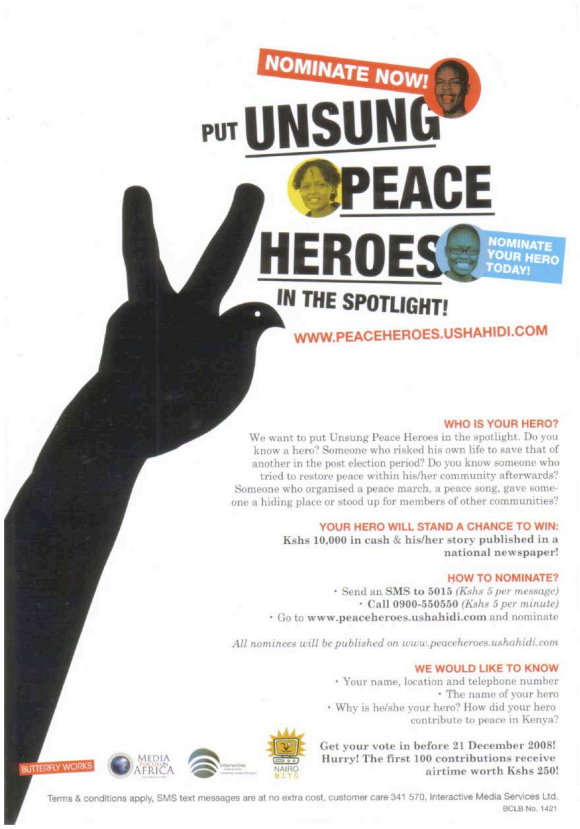
Spreading a positive message of peace

The ***Unsung Peace Heroes*** project began as a way to recognize individuals who participated in peace efforts in the violent aftermath of the December 2007 Kenyan General Election. The goal of the campaign was to "motivate and symbolize goodwill amongst (young) Kenyans towards each other in the aftermath of the violence and conflict which started in December 2007." ***Butterfly Works***, an Amsterdam-based "co-design" organization, and ***Media Focus on Africa Foundation (MFAF)***, a Nairobi-based nongovernmental media-for-development organization, developed the Unsung Peace Heroes campaign. ***Unsung Peace Heroes*** used the ***Ushahidi*** platform to collect nominations for local peace heroes, post the nominations, and map the locations of the peace efforts. People could send nominations via the Peace Heroes site, SMS, email, and by filling out a paper nomination at various peace events. Unsung Peace Heroes received nominations through all four options.



Setting up the instance

Emer worked closely with David Kobia, lead developer at Ushahidi, during the Unsung Peace Heroes setup. Ushahidi hosted the site for the project so no one at Butterfly Works or MFAF had to install the platform on their servers; however Emer worked with a PHP developer to adjust the site structure and visual design. In short, the Butterfly Works team had control over the design of the site and worked closely with Ushahidi to get the site up and running. Kevin Madegwa, one of the volunteers responsible for managing the Unsung Peace Heroes Ushahidi site, reported having little difficulty using the administrative interface. Kevin, who responded to Ushahidi's feedback survey, found the features of the Ushahidi site to be "very useful to my project because I can easily modify ideas and easily make corrections." He also responded that the categorization was "super nice," and indicated that he liked it. Overall, Kevin found the setup and navigation easy to use.



Gathering nominations and visualizing the results

Marten Schoonman, former Projects Coordinator at MFAF, thought the Ushahidi platform was effective for meeting their project objectives. He indicated that not only did they learn where peace initiatives and positive action took place, but also where violence occurred. According to Marten, the peace nominations they received align with the places where the most violence was reported during the post-election crisis.

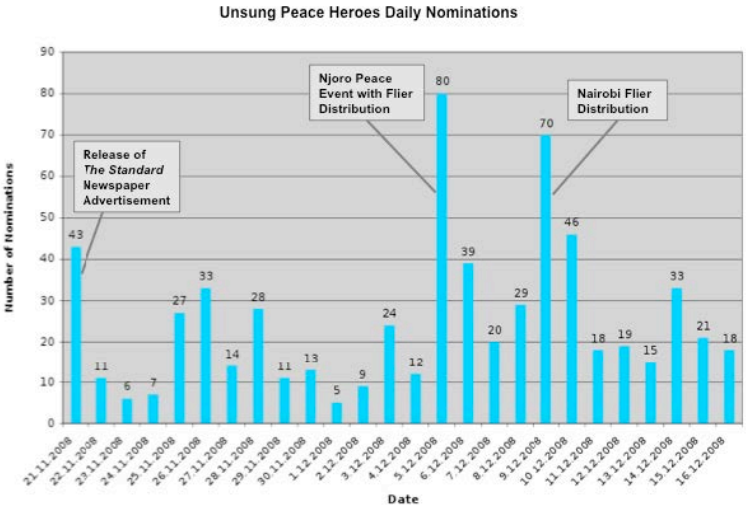
The Unsung Peace Heroes campaign was the first time mapping was used as part of a Butterfly Works or MFAF campaign. According to Marten, mapping and visualization of the data helps show patterns when compared to previous Media Focus SMS-based campaigns that did not have geo-located information associated with the messages. Because each nomination was tied to a specific location, it enabled the data managers to see that people in the area nominated a particular hero. Marten noted that the mapping helped ensure that winners were selected from various parts of the country. However, he also indicated that there is a major drawback of an Internet-based project: “The people who Media Focus on Africa Foundation are targeting do not have Internet access - We want to bring the results back to the people using mass media.” As a result of the project goals, Internet was only one part of the larger project and campaign. Both MFAF and Butterfly Works use multimedia approaches to target large, diverse audiences.

Unsung Peace Heroes received over 500 nominations. Combining an offline and online strategy yielded the most nominations. After advertisements were placed in the daily newspapers and fliers distributed at peace events, nominations increased. The first peak (43 nominations) came after a half-page color advertisement appeared in The Standard newspaper (see graph below). The largest peak of 80 nominations occurred after flier distribution at a peace event in Njoro organized by Citizen Assembly. The second largest peak of 70 nominations occurred after flier distributions at a peace gathering in Nairobi. At both events, the volunteers in the project team got some friends to assist them in distributing fliers. The campaign used one advertisement with the same design to promote the Unsung Peace Heroes (see flier below). The team mailed 2000 posters and 20,000 fliers to partners throughout Kenya with a reach across 12 towns.

Volunteers distributed fliers during Generation Jipange, a peace event in Njoro, and Huruma and Jamhuri Day. According to Marten, “the distribution of fliers by hand during relevant events (peace in this case) worked wonders.” He believed that distributing fliers at the events was successful because “people participate with a certain mindset for that day and find it attractive to participate and spend a few shillings.” During the campaign, Kenyans nominated peace heroes who protected others from violence despite putting their own lives in danger; distributed food and goods to those in need; and those who promoted peace through organizing peace marches and singing peace songs.

The Unsung Peace Heroes team announced the results of the contest in February 2009, showcasing eight winners. The winners represent Kenyans from various parts of the country,

backgrounds and ways of life. Butterfly Works and MFAF announced the winners during live events, placed an ad in The Standard newspaper and posted the winners picture and biographies on the Unsung Peace Heroes website.



Unsung Peace Heroes and Unexpected Outcomes

Butterfly Works and MFAF's multimedia strategy for promotion and gathering nominations had very successful results in terms of the number of nominations they received. This strategy has been recommended to others interested in deploying Ushahidi because it allows project implementers to target diverse audiences including those that do not regularly access the Internet. The goal of Unsung Peace Heroes was to recognize and reward Kenyans for promoting peace during a time of violence in the country. The implementers expected that the campaign would empower the unsung peace heroes to continue to engage in peace efforts as well as encourage others to actively promote peace in their communities. Emer Beamer, the research and development director at Butterfly Works, describes some of the unforeseen impacts of Unsung

Peace Heroes as "something you didn't see coming, but was often more valuable than anything else." In other words, the project sparked more positive action from the winners, which in turn led to more positive events. The idea of unexpected outcomes fits in with Butterfly Works overall philosophy regarding a "positive chain of events." In the case of Unsung Peace Heroes, that chain continued to grow well after the conclusion of the project.

The most vivid examples of unexpected outcomes resulted from the work of the eight Unsung Peace Heroes winners. For example, Joel Cheruiyot Sigei set up a prize to re-run the unsung peace heroes competition in his village so that people could nominate good leaders within their community. Two winners were invited on the NTV show, Heroes, and Kamakei 'Freddy' Ole Sangiriaki started his own peace organization in his community. More broadly, in 2010, one year after the post-election violence, newspapers republished the Unsung Peace Hero winners despite many other reports recapping the crisis and focusing on the problems. According to Emer, this shows that reporting on people who do something good for their community is newsworthy too.

Moving forward and 'Building Bridges'

The success of the Unsung Heroes project and the impact it had on the winners and their communities sparked an interest in Butterfly Works and MFAF to do another project related to peace in Kenya. According to Emer, "we were really happy with the crowdsourcing aspect of the whole thing, and people wanted us to repeat it in other places," so the team began thinking about how to develop a long-term strategy and initiative. "We knew we wanted to do it again, but it had to be different to make sense for the situation in longer term so that's how we came up with the Building Bridges project and it being about peace initiatives in general." The goal of the Building Bridges project was to recognize and reward Kenyans who participate in peace initiatives and promote conflict resolution as a way of strengthening the nation's peace-building

capacity. The project had two main objectives: (1) map peace initiatives throughout Kenya and (2) recognize and reward (with prize money) Kenyans who participate in peace initiatives and promote conflict resolution.

Building Bridges launched in April 2009 and ran for three months as a competition in which individuals, community-based organizations, and civil society organizations were eligible to win a prize for their work. According to a press release sent out to Kenyan bloggers, “Building Bridges is open to all Kenyans engaged in peace-building and peacemaking activities, including organising peace gatherings, community discussions, creative and sportive activities or even holding festivities and doing pro bono work to ensure peace in areas. Building Bridges is putting them all on the map and rewarding the most promising projects.”

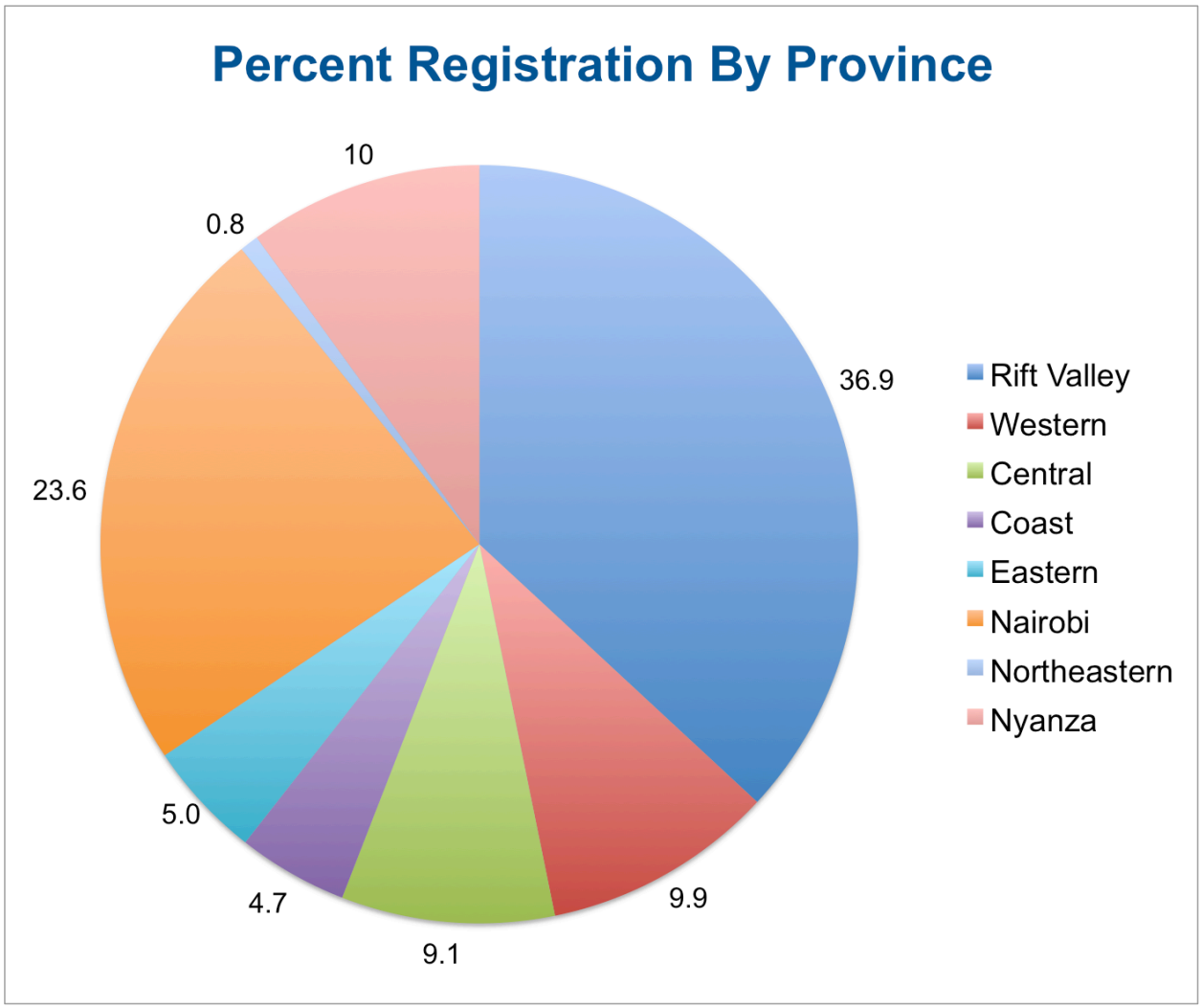
Unlike Unsung Peace Heroes, Building Bridges was not based on nominations, but rather on registrations. The project designers anticipated that people would register via a web form, email, SMS, voicemail or postal mail and then update their peace initiatives through the similar mechanisms. They expected most submissions to be sent through SMS. That data-handling team, a group of three former NairoBits students employed by the project, were responsible for managing the registrations and updates. They received most of their submissions via mobile phone, typically preceded by a text messages asking for more information about the initiative.

According to Rukia Sebit, the leader of the data-handling team, any texts with “info,” “Building Bridges,” “5447” (the registration short code), or left blank were treated as inquiries for more information. When they received these messages, the data team would call the people back.

Some people wanted more general information about Building Bridges, others wanted to register their peace activities, and some people were simply confused about the initiative.

The competition received more than 600 registrations from individuals and groups all over Kenya. The data team believed that the project had good reach and that Kenyans throughout the country were familiar with the initiative because of the advertisements, particularly the radio spots, and the strength of word-of-mouth, especially through their connections with PeaceNet-Kenya and other local partners. The partnership with PeaceNet-Kenya was critical for spreading the word about Building Bridges to communities with limited access to mass media.

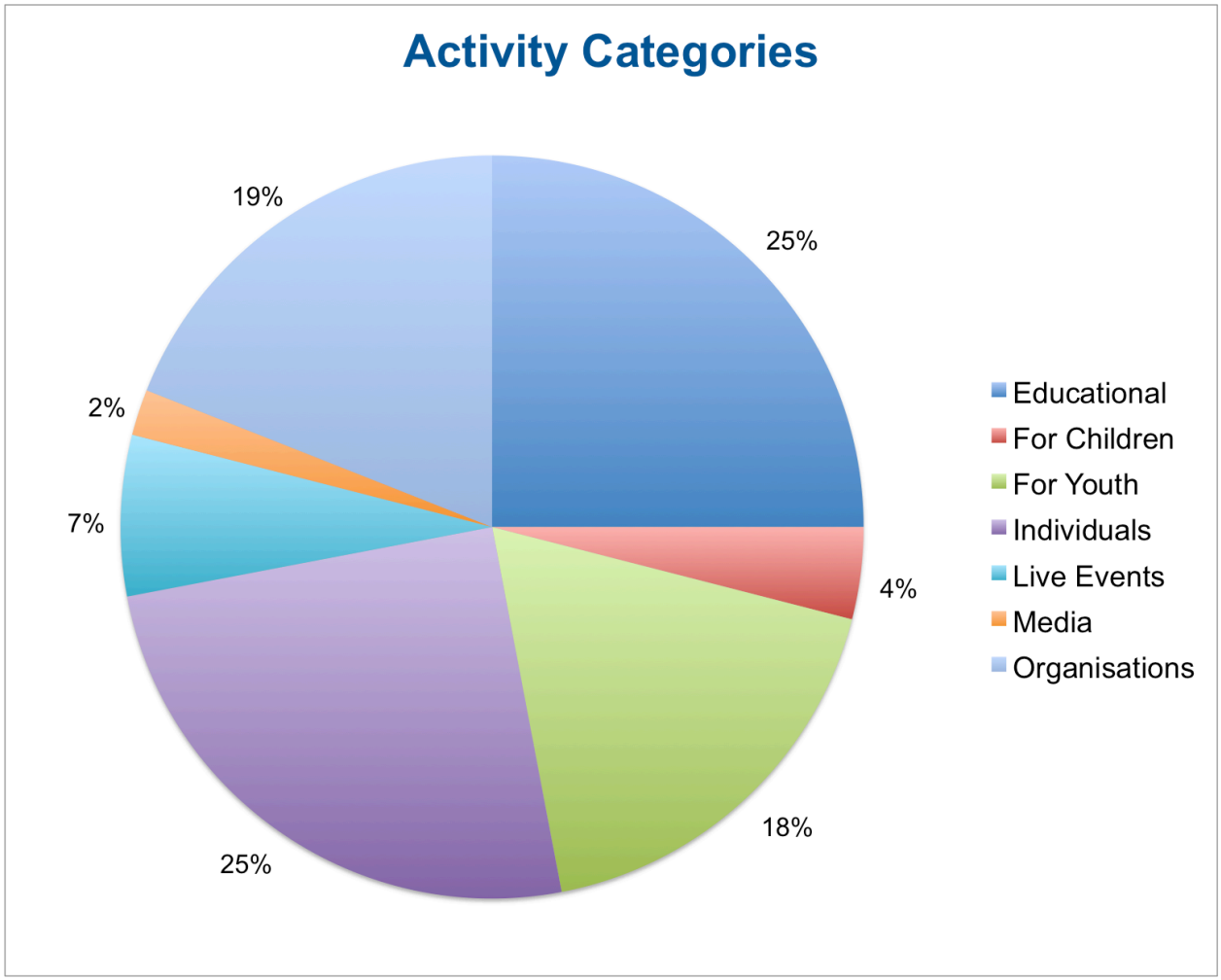
Analysis of the available data showed that the majority of registrations came from the Rift Valley and Nairobi provinces (36.9% and 23.6% respectively).[1] There were 61 registrations from Nyanza province, 10% of all registrations in the country, with Eastern province accounting for 9.9% of registrations.



[1] The Building Bridges has 628 registrations posted, but only 618 have provincial data used in this analysis.

Activity Categories

There were a total of 1,409 activities entered into seven categories. This number is much larger than the number of registrations because some activities were tagged with more than one category. The three largest categories were Individuals, Organizations, and Educational Activities. Media and For Children were the smallest categories.



The Building Bridges jury selected five individual winners, two community-based organizations, and two civil society organizations. The winners were Jane Mweru from Eldoret; Amani Kibera, a CBO located in Nairobi; and the Rafiki Club, which works in Kakamega, Mumias, Msabweni, Mitaboni, and Nairobi. Mweru was injured in a church that was set ablaze during the post-election violence. After the crisis, Mweru opened a nursery school for children who were affected by the church fire. Amani Kibera is a youth program focused on peacebuilding and conflict management through the use of sports, arts, culture, and entertainment.

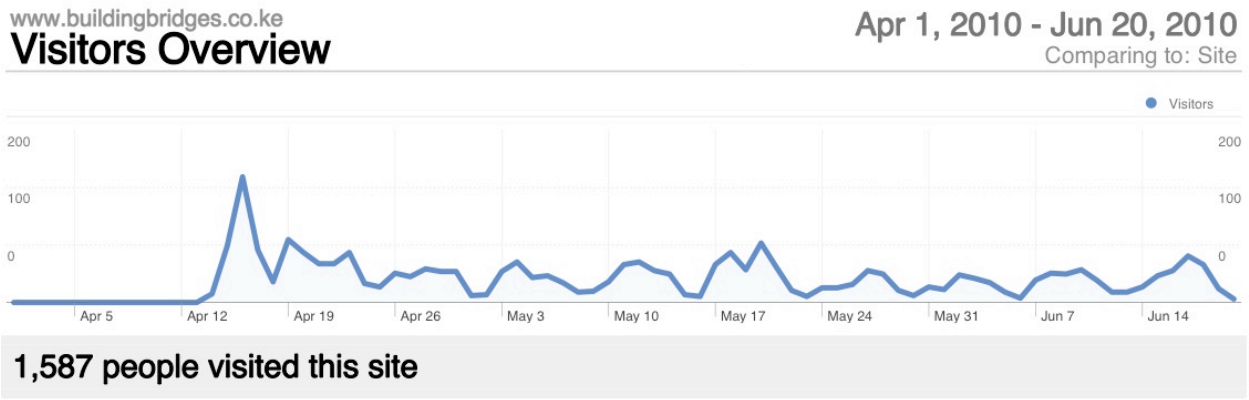
Rafiki Club focuses on empowering women and girls in various Kenyan communities. After the post-election violence, the club developed a program that paired women of different ethnic and religious backgrounds with one another in a letter-writing program. On September 21, 2010, World Peace Day, the winners and runners-up were recognized and rewarded at an event at the iHub, marking the end of the project.

Mapping and multimedia approach

The Building Bridges website was built by integrating the Ushahidi platform with Joomla!, an open-source content management system (CMS). Although this presented some challenges, which are discussed below, combining the platforms allowed for the desired functionality and design. The Butterfly Works staff was more familiar with Joomla! and hired a developer who was comfortable with the platform. Prior to launching the campaign, Butterfly Works conducted a performance test with a small group from Kenya (see Appendix 1 for the questionnaire). The website worked well for outside users and the integration allowed for more functionality than using either platform alone. This type of integration and customization is one of the advantages to using open-source software solutions. With access to the software's code, programmers can customize the tools to better meet their needs. Both Ushahidi and Joomla! make their code available online.

Although the map was important for tracking and visualizing the peace initiatives, it was not as important for the actual registrants. For example, someone could register without ever going online or even knowing about the Ushahidi instance. One of the major goals of Building Bridges was to be as inclusive as possible, which means not requiring individuals to have Internet access to participate. The site, however, did receive consistent visitors from Kenya(mostly the cities) and around the world.[2] In addition to the Building Bridges website, they used a Facebook page, Facebook profile, and Twitter account to reach a wider audience and increase participation and interaction.

Website traffic: Number of visitors to Building Bridges site between April 1, 2010 and June 20, 2010



Challenges

Despite the overall success of the Building Bridges campaign, the team faced a number of challenges along three main fronts: technical, messaging, and personnel and capacity. These areas all present different types of challenge, some of which the team could overcome and others that were not resolved.

[2] Unfortunately, we do not have analytics after June 20, 2010, but it can be assumed that visitors stayed steady or perhaps even spiked at the conclusion of the project in July.

Technical challenges

One of the project's biggest technical challenges was integrating Ushahidi with the Joomla! content management system. The Joomla! integration created challenges for the data handling team in Nairobi. Because of the design of the two administration sides, it was difficult to move data between the different systems. The data handling team developed a system for data

management using Joomla!, Ushahidi and Google Docs. Having three different databases created inefficiencies and slowed the data entry process and website updates.

Two other major technical challenges: slow and unreliable Internet connections, and mobile limitations were challenges that the team worked to overcome despite little control over these issues. The data handling team relied primarily on Safaricom 3G modems for their Internet connections. These modems, although rather convenient, were often slow. And, if the Safaricom network was down, the team had limited access to a backup Internet connection. In addition, the lack of Internet access in much of Kenya prevented participants from accessing the website, which meant they weren't able to register their projects online or view other projects. Because of this lack of Internet access, mobile phones were essential for communicating with participants and for registering projects.

The 160-character limit of text messaging presented a challenge for Building Bridges because they needed to collect detailed information about the peace initiatives. It was not possible for people to register their initiatives using SMS because registration required that the projects were entered into the online system. The data team would use the information from the text messages to register the initiatives, but this was not an automatic process. Registrants could send in basic information – name, location, and perhaps one detail – but needed to either fill the web registration, mail in the registration or relay the information to the data team over the phone.

In most cases, the team would receive a text message with some information about the initiative and then call the person back to get the remainder of the information. If the people responsible for the initiative had access to the Internet, they could update their projects online. If not, they could send updates via text message. The data entry process was often tedious due to the limitations of mobile and the complicated backend. However, the data team developed a system for collecting, entering, and managing the data, which is discussed in more detail below.

Communication and Message challenges

Another set of challenges had less to do with technology and more to do with communication and the campaign message. Despite consistent messaging across media, it was not always clear to potential participants what Building Bridges was or what they should do to participate. Potential participants would SMS blank text messages or messages asking for more information about the campaign, but would often not submit initiatives. Building Bridges received 16,320 text messages and 628 usable registrations, which are posted to the site. The large discrepancy between the number of messages received and the actual number of registrations suggests that participants were unclear about the purpose of Building Bridges. They would text to the short code without a clear sense of why they were contacting the campaign.

The team faced challenges communicating with people on the phone to get more information. It was difficult for the team to talk with people who did not speak English or Swahili. Other times, it was difficult to reach people: the team would call them back, but receive no answer. Some team members disagreed over what qualified as peace activities and what should be mapped. For example, one man said that he talked about peace with patrons in his store. He did not have an organized peace activity, but said he used daily interactions with customers to discuss peace. Some Building Bridges team members felt that this did not qualify as a peace initiative and did not want to add it to the map, while others thought that it did and should be added to the site. In other words, at times, the team disagreed over what should be posted to the site. It would not qualify for the prizes because it did not meet the criteria, but it could still be mapped to show the work going on in that community (see Appendix 2 for criteria used by the jury for selecting winners).

More broadly, the Amsterdam team and the Kenya team worked in different environments and sometimes were unable to communicate effectively. Butterfly Works often wanted processes to move more quickly, but the Kenyan team had to cope with the inefficiencies in local systems and Kenyan bureaucracy, which often slowed them down. For example, any competition that awards prizes in Kenya needs approval by the slow-acting Betting Control and Licensing Board. This agency delayed the progress of Building Bridges as the team waited for approval.

Capacity challenges

The final set of challenges had to do with capacity and personnel. At times it was difficult to coordinate the two teams, one working in Amsterdam and the other in Nairobi. The distance, differential access to technology, and cultural differences sometimes hindered the two teams. For example, a Butterfly Works staff member in the Netherlands did the web development and Joomla! integration, but the data handling team responsible for using the site was based in Nairobi. When the site didn't work, they would need to contact Butterfly Works or try to come up with a "fix" independently. Not having the web developer in Nairobi with the data handling team slowed the process and sometimes led to confusion or misunderstandings between the team members.

As previously mentioned, the data team said that the registration process was not as clear or easy to participants as it could have been, which slowed down the data entry process and created other inefficiencies in the system. For example, the team added a third database to the process, a Google Docs spreadsheet where they managed SMS. In addition, there was little separation of duties among data team members. In other words, all the team members did every step of the data entry process rather than separating the tasks.

Building Bridges Post-implementation

After the initial competition, the implementing partners had plans to refocus their efforts to be more of a networking and facilitation platform allowing groups and individuals to learn about

each other as well as link up. As of early 2011, Butterfly Works and Media Focus on Africa Foundation had no plans to continue Building Bridges although they originally planned to run a second phase. They did not receive continued funding to work in Kenya, and therefore, the project has not moved into phase two.

In April 2011, Butterfly Works released a toolkit, “Social Change Initiatives,” geared toward others interested in designing peace campaigns. The toolkit includes a “how to” guide, a case study of Building Bridges, the software download for the Joomla! component for Ushahidi, Building Bridges’ graphics, and guidelines for monitoring and evaluating. All the materials are available for download and are free for users.

Project Evaluation and Impact

The project team felt that the Building Bridges had positive impact on individuals and communities. The research and development director at Butterfly Works felt that as an organization Butterfly Works learned more about cross-media campaigns with their collaborating partners. She also believed that through the project, people were encouraged and supported. Butterfly Works also performed a countrywide evaluation of the impact of their project.

According to their study, 95% of people surveyed thought the campaign was associated with changes in their community.[3] Based upon Butterfly Works' stated goals and objectives[4] the data team also shared their perspective on the success of the project in achieving its goals and objectives by completing a survey with five-point Likert scales (See Appendix 3). This is one way to measure a group of people's feelings about a situation. It can be used to learn how people's feelings change over time.

[3] Butterfly Works. (2011). Toolkit number 1: Social change campaign

[4] Ibidz

Project Goals (2 Respondents)			
	Question	**Average (1-5)**	
1	How successful was the Building Bridges project in encouraging all Kenyans to stand up and act for peace in their area?	4	Somewhat successful
2	How successful was the Building Bridges project in encouraging all Kenyans to become active drivers of peace through the development and registration of their own peace initiatives?	4	Somewhat successful
3	How well di the Building Bridges project foster collaboration and interactivity amongst peace initiatives across Kenya?	3.5	OK to Well
4	How well did the Building Bridges project support those doing great work?	3	OK
5	How well did the Building Bridges project create a sustainable culture of peace throughout the country?	3.5	OK to Well
Project (2 Respondents)			
1	How successful was the project in enabling people to register their own peace initiatives, no matter how tech literate they were on where they were located?	3	OK
2	How well did the project visualize and map all registered projects including related information on a central platform?	4.5	Well to Very well
3	How well did the project allow people to connect and (potentially) offer support?	2	Not so well
4	How well did the project Inspire people to take their own action?	3.5	OK to Well

The data team felt that the Building Bridges project was somewhat successful in (1) encouraging all Kenyans to stand up and act for peace in their area, and somewhat successful in (2) encouraging all Kenyans to become active drivers of peace through development and registration of their own peace initiatives. The team also felt that the project was "ok" at supporting those that did great work. Respondents in the Buttery Works evaluation also shared this sentiment: "A broad majority of participants would have wished for stronger direct support by potentially regional support teams to guide them and help moving their initiatives further, informing them on updates etc."[5]

The team felt that the project was neither successful nor unsuccessful at enabling people to register their initiatives because some never registered their initiative on their own. They also felt that the project objective to connect people together and potentially offer support did no work so well. One member of the data teams shared her thoughts: “I strongly felt that what we could have done better was to organize community forums, sports events (something to bring the community together). Then used that avenue to link the peace makers together to avoid repetition of the same peace projects in one area, where they could link to work together to achieve the goal.”

[5] Ibid

Appendix 1

Performance test: Building Bridges
www.buildingbridges.co.ke/joomla

25 March 2010

Butterfly Works

The goal of this test is to see how the Building Bridges website performs. Based on the results we will make the changes needed to realize a good accessibility.

1. Please start with entering the url: www.buildingbridges.co.ke/joomla in the address bar of your browser.
2. How long does it take before you see anything (seconds)?
3. Does the website look well structured or is something out of place?
4. How does the design look?
5. Do you see the image player on the homepage? How does it work?
6. Could you test the website in another browser and answer the above questions again?
7. If you click on 'View Map' in the menu, you will see a map, categories, and some time filter options. Can you tell me how long it takes before you see anything appearing?
8. Does it look structured to you or is something out of place?
9. Please play around with the map to see if it works. The dots in the map are links to projects.
10. If you click on 'Reports' in the menu, you will see a list of all the projects that are on the website. Can you tell me if it works?
11. Please play aroud with the list of reports to see if it works. The titles of the reports are links to the projects.
12. Maybe you could visit the other pages to test if everything works and looks the way it should.
13. Any other comments?

Thanks for helping!

Appendix 2

Selection Criteria

1. The applicant must be able to proof it realized a series (at least two but preferably more) of connected, consecutive activities which form one initiative/project
2. The applicant must be able to provide at least one independent reference in relation to the activity activities who are not family relations of the applicant or in any way related to/involved in the activity.
3. Applicants should be willing to have a video or audio interview made of them and be willing to appear in mainstream media in relation to the Building Bridges campaign.

Specific for organisations:

4. In case the applicant is an organization, it must have registered the organization with e.g. the NGO council and be able to provide proof of registration upon request.
5. The applicant must provide evidence of the sustainability of the activity/activities. Within no more than two years from the start of the activity, it should:
    a. Achieve financial independence (i.e. not rely on donor funding for continuation, the activity should be able to pay for itself) OR
    b. Serve a continued need in the local community and have a steady support base (can be financially and/or voluntary).

Specific for individuals:

6. In case the applicant is an individual, he/she must be not less than 18 years old at the time of entry.

The selection process: Selection of the winning activities will be done by a panel of experts in the area of peace building and sustainable development; the jury. The jury will assess the applications based on the criteria above and their own interpretation thereof due to the expected variety in the types of activities that will be submitted and the nature of the criteria by which they are assessed. The decisions made by the jury are final and will not be subject to correspondence.

NB. These criteria are subject to changes at the discretion of the jury, but with final approval by the implementing parties.